

Austria

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The country

In 1867 the empire of Austria, ruled by Habsburgs for several centuries, became the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The Republic of Austria was founded in 1918 after the First World War. The so-called First Republic was ended by a civil war in 1934. Between 1934 and 1938 Austria was ruled by the so-called Austro-Fascists, and in 1938 Austria became part of the Third Reich. The Second Republic was founded in 1945 after the Second World War.

Austria is bordered on the north by Germany and the Czech Republic, on the east by Slovakia and Hungary, on the south by Slovenia and Italy, and on the west by Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The total area of Austria is 83,858 km². With a population of 8.1 million the population density is 97 inhabitants per km². The capital, and the largest city, is Vienna with 1.6 million inhabitants. If the surrounding regions are included, more than one quarter of all Austrians live in the capital area. The urban population accounts for about 56 per cent of the total population.

Austria is a country of great cultural homogeneity. The official language is German. There used to be only few and small ethnic minorities in Austria. However, since the end of the 1960s numerous migrant workers have been attracted to the country. They have primarily come from the former Yugoslavia and Turkey. Presently, about 10 per cent of the people living in Austria are non-Austrian citizens. About 80 per cent of the Austrian population belong to the Roman Catholic Church, 5 per cent to the Lutheran Church, and about 9 per cent are of no religious denomination. The percentage of those without any religious denomination is continuously growing.

The Austrian economy has been based on both private and public enterprises. All the basic industries were nationalised in 1946. In the late 1980s and early 1990s government control was, however, reduced through privatisation efforts. By Western European standards, Austria has a rather uneven distribution of income and a highly developed welfare system. The inflation rate during the last years has been low and the official unemployment rate is about 4 per cent. Estimates of the real unemployment rate are, however, much higher. In the mid-1990s about 32 per cent of the population worked in the industrial sector, approximately 7 per cent in the agriculture and about 61 per cent in the service sector.

The principal manufactured products in the early 1990s were machinery, metals and metal products, chemical and food products, and wood and paper products. Of the total Austrian land area, 17 per cent is cultivated. About half of the farms are under 10 hectares in size. Austria is one of the world's top tourist destinations. In 1998 some 17 million foreigners visited Austria. More than half of these tourists came from Germany.

Austria is a federal republic consisting of nine states, one of which is the capital city. Executive power in Austria is exercised by the president, who is elected by popular vote every six years, and by the Council of Ministers, or cabinet, which is headed by the chancellor. The chancellor is appointed by the president for a term not exceeding four years. Federal legislative power is vested in the National Council (Nationalrat), the lower house of the bicameral Federal Assembly. The National Council is composed of 183 members elected for four years. The Federal Council (Bundesrat), the upper house, consists of 64 members chosen by the provincial legislatures in proportion to the amount of population for terms ranging from four to six years.

Each of the nine states has a unicameral legislature elected on the same basis as the National Council. The legislature chooses the provincial governor. All state legislation must be submitted by the governor to the federal ministry for approval. The provincial legislature, however, may override a ministerial veto by majority vote. Cities and villages are administered by elected communal councils, which in turn elect mayors.

Alcohol production and trade

Austria can be defined as self-sufficient in alcoholic beverages. The production of wine, beer and distilled spirits is large enough to cover and partly exceed the domestic consumption. Until today, Austrians have preferred domestic alcoholic beverages. In this regard Austrians can be considered very conservative.

Austrian wine became internationally famous in 1985 when the Austrian wine scandal occurred. Antifreeze had been added to wine and thus a more expensive ice-wine had been produced. The scandal became a turning point in the Austrian wine production. Until the mid-1980s the state had promoted the increase of wine production, but after 1985 only quality wines were promoted. Until the 1980s areas for wine cultivation had increased, but they started to decrease after 1985. Accordingly, harvests have become smaller after the mid-1980s. In the early 1950s the yearly wine production was about 1.1 million hectolitres. By the early 1970s it had increased to about 2.5 million hectolitres (International statistics, 1977). During the 1980s the yearly wine production amounted to 2.8 million hectolitres on average, with a fluctuation from 1.1 to 4.9 million hectolitres. During the 1990s, the average amount of wine produced dropped to 2.5 million hectolitres.

In the first half of the 1990s, some 6 per cent of the wine production was exported and some 8 per cent of the domestic wine consumption consisted of imported beverages. In the first half of the 1980s, especially wine exports but also wine imports were clearly higher than a decade later (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997). Usually red wine is imported, because the soil and climate in Austria is better suited for the production of white wine than red wine. With the exception of the first half of the 1980s, annual wine imports have been higher than wine exports. Before Austria joined the European Union (EU) in 1995, the amount of imported wine was determined by the Ministry of Agriculture on the basis of the domestic harvest.

Beer production was highly concentrated at the time of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The degree of concentration has decreased since the First World War but it is still relatively high. After the Second World War beer production increased continuously until the 1990s. In the mid-1950s the yearly beer production was about 4.5 million hectolitres. In the late 1960s it reached 7.5 million hectolitres and in the early 1990s about 10 million hectolitres. Since then beer production has levelled off and even decreased. More than half of the beer produced is relatively strong lager beer. Nearly 70 per cent is packaged beer and a good 30 per cent draught beer.

Both in a national and an international perspective, brewing is the most successful branch of Austrian alcohol production. The degree of self-sufficiency has traditionally been higher than 95 per cent. In 1994, 7 per cent of Austrian beer production was exported and 3 per cent of the beer consumed in Austria was of foreign origin. The level of beer imports has been about the same during the two last decades. Exports of beer, on the other hand, have clearly increased since the mid-1970s. The main export countries are Italy and Hungary. Most imported beer comes from Germany.

Spirits production was regulated by a monopoly until Austria joined the EU in 1995. The Austrian Spirits Monopoly (Branntweinmonopol) was an incomplete production and trade monopoly introduced during the Third Reich in the 1940s. It was kept after 1945 because it protected agrarian spirits production better than the former Austrian regulations. The fact that Austria was almost self-sufficient with regard to distilled spirits was thus mainly due to state regulations. The degree of self-sufficiency has been between 80 and 90 per cent during the last two decades. Counted in pure alcohol, Austrian spirits production was about 100,000 hectolitres at the beginning of the 1980s. In 1994 the corresponding figure was 87,000 hectolitres (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997). This figure was a little higher than the amount of distilled spirits produced in the late 1950s and about the same as the amount of distilled spirits produced in the late 1960s (International statistics, 1977).

Alcohol consumption

During the last century, the development of per capita alcohol consumption in Austria has roughly paralleled the overall economic development. Alcohol consumption dropped sharply during the two world wars and during the great depression at the end of the 1920s, and more or less slowly recovered after the wars. But there has also been at least two major changes in alcohol consumption not related to the overall economic situation. The first of them was the decrease in alcohol consumption in Austria at the beginning of the twentieth century when Austria still was part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. This decrease is very likely related to the rise of the temperance movement (Eisenbach-Stangl, 1991a; 1994). The second change started at the beginning of the 1970s. The per capita consumption of pure alcohol per Austrian aged 15 years or higher has since then decreased continuously by 16%, even though several alcohol related taxes were reduced, even though the real prices for alcoholic beverages dropped and even though the economic situation improved continuously (Uhl, 2005b).

The consumption data in Table 1 are presented in litres per capita by beverage categories and calculated by the respective producers themselves or on their behalf. Per

capita consumption of beer has been calculated since 1956 by the Austrian Brewers Association (Verband der Brauereien Österreichs). Until 1955 the figures can be found in the publication of the Austrian Statistical Bureau. Per capita consumption of wine is calculated by the Austrian Statistical Bureau, and the consumption figures of distilled spirits are calculated by the Austrian Association of Distilleries (Verband der Spirituosenindustrie). Though it is also the producers who provide figures for international statistics such as the World Drink Trends, collected by the Productschap voor Gedistilleerde Dranken, the data officially available in Austria on beer and wine consumption differ from those in international statistics. For mysterious reasons the figures in international statistics are sometimes higher and sometimes lower than those officially available in Austria.

Table 1. Consumption of alcoholic beverages by beverage categories in Austria
Sources: Austrian Association of Distilleries; Austrian Brewery Association; Austrian Statistical Bureau.

year	Percentage of Population Under- 15 years	Litres of total drink per Austrians aged 15 thru 99		Litres pure alcohol per year per Austrians aged 15 thru 99					grams pure alcohol per day
		beer	wine	spirits	beer	wine	cidres	total	
1955	22,1%	6,9	7,4	,9	,8	,0	,4	,2	5,5
1956	21,8%	9,2	0,6	,0	,0	,4	,5	,8	6,9
1957	21,8%	0,0	2,2	,2	,5	,6	,5	,7	8,9
1958	21,8%	3,5	1,9	,4	,7	,5	,5	,1	9,8
1959	21,9%	8,3	5,7	,4	,4	,0	,6	,3	0,2
1960	22,3%	3,3	4,1	,4	,7	,8	,6	,4	0,4
1961	22,7%	7,1	6,3	,6	,9	,0	,6	0,0	1,7
1962	22,8%	04,8	4,9	,3	,2	,9	,6	0,0	1,6
1963	23,0%	11,0	6,4	,6	,5	,0	,6	0,8	3,4
1964	23,3%	20,6	7,1	,6	,0	,1	,7	1,4	4,7
1965	23,6%	20,9	5,2	,2	,0	,0	,7	2,0	5,9
1966	23,8%	29,8	1,2	,8	,5	,7	,8	3,9	0,1
1967	24,1%	29,8	1,6	,4	,5	,8	,8	3,5	9,3
1968	24,3%	36,0	3,6	,6	,8	,0	,9	4,3	0,9
1969	24,3%	28,9	3,8	,7	,4	,0	,8	4,0	0,4
1970	24,4%	30,4	5,4	,6	,5	,2	,9	4,2	0,7
1971	24,3%	31,8	7,2	,8	,6	,4	,9	4,7	1,9
1972	24,2%	39,3	6,6	,1	,0	,4	,9	5,4	3,2
1973	23,9%	40,5	7,8	,1	,0	,5	,9	5,6	3,7
1974	23,6%	41,2	6,0	,2	,1	,3	,9	5,5	3,6
1975	23,2%	34,7	5,5	,1	,7	,2	,9	5,0	2,4
1976	22,7%	35,3	6,7	,1	,8	,4	,9	5,1	2,7
1977	22,2%	36,5	6,1	,2	,8	,3	,9	5,2	2,9
1978	21,6%	33,4	4,4	,7	,7	,1	,9	4,4	1,1
1979	21,0%	29,6	5,0	,0	,5	,2	,9	4,5	1,4

year	Percentage of Population Under- 15 years	Litres of total drink per Austrians aged 15 thru 99			Litres pure alcohol per year per Austrians aged 15 thru 99				grams pure alcohol per day
		beer	wine	spirits	beer	wine	cidres	total	
1980	20,4%	30,2	4,7	,0	,5	,1	,9	4,5	1,4
1981	20,0%	30,7	3,5	,9	,5	,0	,9	4,3	0,9
1982	19,5%	32,8	3,2	,9	,6	,0	,9	4,4	1,1
1983	19,1%	35,7	6,1	,9	,8	,3	,9	4,9	2,2
1984	18,7%	37,5	4,7	,8	,9	,1	,9	4,7	1,8
1985	18,3%	33,9	1,8	,8	,7	,8	,8	4,1	0,6
1986	18,0%	43,1	9,8	,9	,2	,6	,9	4,5	1,3
1987	17,8%	38,2	1,1	,9	,9	,7	,9	4,4	1,2
1988	17,6%	40,2	1,4	,9	,0	,8	,9	4,5	1,5
1989	17,5%	42,8	2,4	,9	,1	,9	,9	4,8	1,9
1990	17,4%	45,9	2,1	,8	,3	,8	,9	4,9	2,2
1991	17,4%	45,0	0,6	,1	,3	,7	,9	4,9	2,3
1992	17,5%	50,0	0,0	,5	,5	,6	,9	4,5	1,4
1993	17,6%	44,5	9,5	,8	,2	,5	,9	4,4	1,2
1994	17,6%	38,4	7,5	,3	,9	,3	,8	3,3	8,9
1995	17,5%	38,6	8,7	,0	,9	,5	,9	4,3	0,9
1996	17,4%	36,0	8,2	,3	,8	,4	,9	4,3	1,0
1997	17,3%	34,8	6,2	,0	,7	,2	,8	3,8	9,8
1998	17,1%	36,5	7,3	,8	,8	,3	,8	3,8	9,8
1999	16,9%	36,2	6,7	,8	,8	,2	,8	3,7	9,6
2000	16,7%	36,9	7,1	,1	,8	,3	,8	4,1	0,4
2001	16,8%	32,0	7,1	,5	,6	,3	,8	3,2	8,5
2002	16,6%	33,2	4,1	,5	,7	,9	,8	2,9	7,9
2003	16,4%	33,3	5,4	,6	,7	,1	,8	3,1	8,3

Agrarian production of distilled spirits and wine, and thus the per capita alcohol consumption, is presumably underestimated by the respective figures. Furthermore, an increasing amount of alcoholic beverages has presumably been privately imported from neighbouring countries since Austria joined the EU in 1995. On the other hand, the fact that Austria has a big tourist sector means that part of the alcoholic beverages consumed in Austria are consumed by tourists. According to Uhl & Springer (1996) the per capita unrecorded alcohol consumption in Austria was roughly one litre in the 1990s (see also Leifman, 2001, 61; Trollidal, 2001, 74-77).

The basic source of the data depicted in table 3.2 is the international survey of alcoholic beverage taxation and control policies conducted by the Brewers Association of Canada (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997). It was chosen for reasons of comparison. However, as mentioned earlier, the data on alcohol consumption available in Austria (Uhl et al, 2005a) differ from those depicted in international statistics. One explanation to this discrepancy is that Austrian wine has a lower alcohol content than the 12 per cent assumed by Hurst, Gregory and Gussman (1997). According to the Institute of Drinks Analysis (Bandion, 1998) it is about 11,5 Vol.% per cent at the present time. On the other hand, the alcohol content of 4.8 per cent for beer assumed by Hurst, Gregory and Gussman (1997) is a bit too low. According to the Verband der Brauereien Österreichs (1997) it should be calculated at 5 per cent. It also has to be considered that the average alcohol content of certain alcoholic beverage categories has changed during the 1950-2000 period. It presumably has increased with beer and wine. Therefore, for several

reasons the figures depicted in table 3.2 are rough measures, suited mostly for comparisons and to assess developments over time.

Table 3.2. Consumption of alcoholic beverages by beverage categories in Austria in litres of pure alcohol per capita and as percentages of total recorded alcohol consumption in the years 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985 and 1995, five years' averages

	1955	1965	1975	1985	1995*
Total alcohol consumption	6.77	9.95	11.20	11.10	10.87
Consumption of distilled spirits	1.78	2.05	1.86	1.52	1.48
Consumption of wines	1.98	3.40	4.31	4.20	3.86
Consumption of beer	3.01	4.50	5.03	5.38	5.53
Percentage of distilled spirits	26	21	17	14	14
Percentage of wines	29	34	38	38	35
Percentage of beer	45	45	45	48	51

* The figures for 1995 have been calculated by taking the per capita consumption figures for beer and wine from the World Drink Trends (2002) and using the same alcohol contents for beer and wine, 4.6 per cent and 11 per cent respectively, as Hurst, Gregory and Gussman (1997). According to World Drink Trends (2002, 30), the total alcohol consumption per capita in 1995 is 9.8 litres.

Sources: Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997; World Drink Trends, 2002.

Total alcohol consumption grew from 5 litres per capita in a year in the beginning of the 1950s to over 10 litres by the mid-1960s. The peak figure, 12 litres of pure alcohol per capita, was reached in 1973. Since the mid-1970s total alcohol consumption has been on a steady decline. Nowadays about 9.4 litres of pure alcohol is consumed per capita in a year (World Drink Trends, 2002).

At first sight Austria is a beer country, as about one half of the pure alcohol consumed is drunk as beer. Beer has been the most popular alcoholic beverage during the last century and its popularity seems to have increased somewhat during the last decades. Counted in pure alcohol, the consumption of beer has increased from 2 litres per capita in a year in 1950 to about 4 litres in the early 1960s and to nearly 6 litres in 1991. Counted in litres of the product, the consumption of beer reached in the early 1990s a figure of 124 litres per capita in a year. Since then beer consumption has slightly decreased to about 108 litres per capita in 2000 (World Drink Trends, 2002).

About one third of all alcohol consumed in Austria is drunk in the form of wine. In the beginning of the 1950s, wine consumption was nearly 2 litres in terms of pure alcohol per capita in a year. It increased very rapidly in the 1960s from 2.5 litres in 1960 to 4.2 litres in 1970. After a stable period of one and half decades wine consumption began to decrease in the mid-1980s. Counted in litres of the product per capita, wine consumption reached its highest level, 37 litres, in 1983. In 2000 the per capita wine consumption was 32 litres (World Drink Trends, 2002).

In 1950 the consumption of distilled spirits in terms of pure alcohol was 1.1 litres per capita. In 1960 the corresponding figure was 2.4 litres. Since then the popularity of distilled spirits has continuously decreased (Eisenbach-Stangl, 1991a). In 2000 the consumption of distilled spirits was 1.4 litres in terms of pure alcohol per capita (World Drink Trends, 2002).

At the state level, Austria consists of beer and wine states. The population of the wine-producing eastern regions of Austria, i.e. Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland, presumably drink more wine than beer, while beer-drinking dominates in the western regions. Wine is traditionally preferred by women, and beer by men, by younger people and by unskilled labourers.

Austria was and still is a so-called wet country, and the Austrian temperance movement has never been as large and influential as the temperance movements in the United States and in the Nordic countries. However, according to Middle European standards it was quite strong and demanded stricter alcohol controls, even prohibition. Nevertheless, moderate alcohol consumption, and under special circumstances also excessive drinking, were and are accepted as important elements of Austrian culture (Uhl et al., 2005b). Alcohol plays an important part in everyday social life and at many festivities, a tradition mirrored and reinforced by songs, novels, films and other kinds of cultural expressions.

Alcohol-related problems, for instance alcoholism or alcohol-related diseases, are usually perceived in Austria as quite distinct from socially accepted patterns of alcohol consumption. In public opinion moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages is not assumed to be bad for health, though in a broader historical perspective alcoholic beverages have lost their meaning as food and medicine (Eisenbach-Stangl, 1991a).

In the mid-1980s the consumption of alcoholic beverages was 150 litres per capita in a year. At the same time the consumption of commercial non-alcoholic beverages was 275 litres per capita per year. Plain water is not included in these figures. By 2000 the per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages per capita had slightly decreased to 144 litres, and the consumption of commercial non-alcoholic beverages had increased to 526 litres. This consumption consisted of 166 litres of coffee, 83 litres of soft drinks, 80 litres of bottled waters, 74 litres of tea, 65 litres of milk and 58 litres of juices. During the last one and half decades, the per capita consumption of juices has increased by 43 litres, that of soft drinks by 31 litres, that of bottled waters by 23 litres, that of coffee by 14 litres and that of milk by 9 litres (World Drink Trends, 2002).

Administrative structure of preventive alcohol policies

In Austria, the association between violence and drinking alcohol is not thought to be very strong. Since Austrian drinking patterns are characterised rather as integrative than as explosive, most Austrians do not perceive violence and drinking alcoholic beverages as related phenomena (Eisenbach-Stangl, 1991a). Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the penal law has considered intoxication a mitigating circumstance, though the mildness of the state towards drunkenness has been continuously decreasing in the twentieth century. Alcohol abuse tends to be attributed to special groups, such as

women, children and adolescents, i.e. to social groups with relatively low alcohol consumption.

Getting severely drunk is not a primary goal, or at least not a conscious primary goal, of most Austrians consuming alcohol. As long as an intoxicated person has neither officially been classified as an alcoholic, nor as somebody drinking in excess, for instance, at work or driving a motor vehicle while intoxicated, the intoxication is most often perceived as an entertaining anecdote and not as an inappropriate or frightening incident.

Alcohol consumption in connection with special activities endangering others increasingly seems to be perceived as problematic, especially if driving is concerned. In the first half of the 1990s, less than 2 per cent of Austrian adults regarded driving a motor vehicle with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level beyond the legal limit as acceptable. In the same survey, however, more than a third of those who own a car admitted that they had violated the regulations concerning drunk driving (Uhl & Springer, 1996).

In Austria a lot of laws, regulations and measures concerning alcohol production, distribution and consumption have been established during the last century. The majority of them were predominantly developed to serve economic and fiscal interests. They were not introduced to deal with alcohol-related social or health problems. Alcohol-related measures were set up largely independently from each other by different administrative bodies and sectors for a variety of reasons, and they were never coordinated under the rubric of alcohol policy. The term alcohol policy was neither officially nor informally perceived to be a meaningful term.

The federal structure of Austria puts many health, safety, welfare and education issues into the responsibility of the nine states. Some issues, such as opening and closing hours for restaurants and pubs have been put into the responsibility of the communities. The horizontal dispersal with regard to measures concerning alcohol-related issues is thus complemented by a vertical dispersal.

In 1955 an advisory board on alcohol issues (Beirat für Alkoholfragen) was founded at the Ministry of Social Affairs, which at that time was also responsible for health affairs. The board was established on the request of the professional union of psychiatrists and the workers' abstainers union, the main branch of the Austrian temperance movement, which was reorganised in 1948. Besides delegates of these two organisations, the board consisted of delegates of the nine state governments, of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, of the Health Insurance System and of the so-called Sozialpartner, that is of representatives of worker and employee organisations on the one hand and of representatives of employer and farmer organisations on the other.

The main aim of the advisory board in the 1955-1962 period was the re-establishment of outpatient and inpatient treatment for alcoholics, which had been introduced in the First Republic but had been abolished during the Second World War. Prevention, which was the main topic of the temperance movement in the years following the First World War, became a subordinated aim. In the 1962-1970 period, the advisory board

concentrated, in addition to treatment for alcoholics, on safety on the road (Eisenbach-Stangl, 1991a).

The advisory board was reorganised in 1970. Since then it has also had to deal with illegal drugs, and therefore it was called the Advisory Board for the Combat Against Abuse of Alcohol and Other Addictive Substances (Beirat zur Bekämpfung des Missbrauchs von Alkohol und anderen Suchtmitteln). As had been foreseen during the discussion about the reorganisation of the advisory board and the integration of illegal drugs in its activities, the illegal drugs quickly displaced the legal ones, and until its dissolution in the beginning of the 1990s the advisory board concentrated on issues related to opiates, cannabis and psychoactive drugs.

The Advisory Board for the Combat Against Abuse of Alcohol and Other Addictive Substances presumably was dissolved because a new administration was established. The new administration until today concentrates on illegal drugs and it consists of state drug coordinators with their offices, on the one hand, and of an inter-ministerial working group, on the other. At first it developed the vertical structure and later on combined it with a horizontal one. Prevention is a major aim among its activities. In the first half of the 1990s, prevention centres were established in almost every state. In addition to illegal drugs, these prevention centres also deal with alcohol and its consequences. According to the Austrian tradition they regard themselves as agencies dealing with addictions. Youth is one of the target groups of the prevention centres (Uhl & Springer, 2000).

Alcohol prevention thus at first became overshadowed by alcohol treatment, a process which had already started in the First Republic and was completed in the 1950s and 1960s (Eisenbach-Stangl, 1999a). Later on alcohol prevention also became overshadowed by illegal drug issues. Alcohol prevention only became somewhat resuscitated by the activities of the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organisation (WHO-EURO) and by the integration of Austria in the EU. Since the mid-1990s, some efforts by federal authorities can be observed to realise the aims defined by the WHO-EURO in the Health for All for 2000 Plan and in the first European Alcohol Action Plan. As a response to these activities, the Ministry of Work, Health and Social Affairs published a handbook on alcohol consumption, alcohol-related problems and controls in 1999 (Uhl et al., 1999; see also Uhl et al., 2001 and Uhl et al. 2005). The same ministry also founded an alcohol coordination and information centre (AKIS) at the oldest and largest treatment centre for alcoholics and drug addicts located in Vienna in 2000. The centre is collecting and distributing relevant information about alcohol and advising the ministry in alcohol-related policy decisions.

The main organisation putting forward alcohol policy is still the ministry responsible for health affairs. Consequently, medical doctors, especially psychiatrists, are the main profession involved in alcohol control measures. In other words, since the beginning of the Second Republic the Ministry of Health is the main organisation putting forward alcohol-related measures, and psychiatrists are the main profession defining the alcohol question. Prevention efforts are consequently understood as prevention of addiction, and prevention efforts are mainly directed at individuals and they are strongly determined by treatment as the main and ultimate measure.

In any case, traditional non-governmental organisations interested in the public health or social policy issues with regard to alcohol, such as the temperance movement, have lost their influence more or less completely during the period after the Second World War, and no new similar groups have developed.

Administrative structure of treatment for alcoholism

Treatment has played an important part in alcohol-related controls in Austria. The establishment of treatment facilities has traditionally been the most visible, most accepted and most extended alcohol-related measure. Treatment for alcoholics has been and still is a part of the psychiatric system. Residential treatment is carried out in special facilities or in departments of psychiatric hospitals. Today Austria has about 800 beds for alcoholics, or alcohol-ill persons as they are officially called. The process of specialisation within psychiatry is still going on (Eisenbach-Stangl, 1999a).

The first special treatment centre for alcoholics was founded in 1922. It was a department for voluntarily and involuntarily admitted alcoholics at the mental asylum in Vienna. This so-called Trinkerheilstätte was closed in 1939 with the beginning of the Second World War. In 1961 the first so-called open clinic (Offene Anstalt), with about 60 beds, was established in Wien-Kalksburg at the edge of Vienna, according to the psychiatric ideology of this time. The term open refers here to the fact that only alcoholics voluntarily seeking treatment could be admitted. Involuntary admissions and compulsory treatment were carried out by psychiatric hospitals. The first open clinic grew continuously and after 1970 five more but smaller open clinics were founded. Additionally, also special departments were established at the psychiatric hospitals. Treatment in these specialised institutions usually lasted from six to eight weeks.

Parallel to this development also outpatient facilities were established, partly directly organised by the inpatient facilities and in any case often in close cooperation with them. The outpatient facilities prepare and motivate patients for inpatient treatment, organise the admissions into inpatient clinics, carry out aftercare, do crisis interventions and, since the 1970s, increasingly carry out treatment themselves.

For alcoholics who have been employed prior to treatment, the health insurance companies cover the treatment costs, as alcoholism was acknowledged as a disease in 1956. If persons without health insurance need treatment, the costs are covered by the welfare system. The insurance companies also pay for several treatments, but during the last decade the number of relapses accepted has decreased. Since the 1950s the definition of alcoholism has changed considerably. Today many more severe cases, but also many less severe cases, are treated than a few decades ago. The latter development could also be interpreted as a movement of treatment in the direction of prevention.

Drunk driving

The area where the most of preventive activities have usually taken place is drunk driving, an area where behaviour under the influence of alcohol also has consequences for others than the drunk person him- or herself. In 1960, a law on drunk driving came

into force in Austria, prohibiting the driving of a motor vehicle if the BAC level was more than 0.08 per cent. In 1960 the legal threshold was also a much discussed topic. For instance, the socialist party demanded the BAC level to be set at 0.05 per cent.

In the 1990s, some pressure groups were formed demanding a change in the legal BAC threshold. After a serious car accident in which children died, caused by a drunk driver, the public pressure increased, and the law was amended in 1998 prohibiting the driving of a motor vehicle with a higher BAC than 0.05 per cent. The largest alcohol-related public media campaign, jointly organised by the federal Ministry of Traffic, a large private institute for traffic safety (Kuratorium für Verkehrssicherheit) and the national radio and television company, focused on the slogan "Don't Drink and Drive". This campaign and continuous media work over many years by the Kuratorium für Verkehrssicherheit are thought to have prepared the Austrian population to accept the reduction of the legal BAC limit.

In 1998 also a lower BAC limit of 0.01 per cent was imposed on persons younger than 20 years, on novice drivers, i.e. drivers within two years after acquisition of the driving licence, on bus and truck drivers driving vehicles over 7.5 tons, on driving school students and on persons who train or assist others in learning how to drive. The penalties for drunk driving increase proportionally with the degree of intoxication. The critical thresholds are BAC levels of 0.01, 0.05, 0.08, 0.12 and 0.16 per cent. It is also prohibited to drive motor vehicles in an impaired condition. This includes emotional stress, tiredness, acute illnesses and any form of substance intoxication including alcohol intoxication, even if the BAC limit falls below the legal BAC thresholds.

The procedural regulations related to the law of drunk driving, and related laws such as the law regulating the acquisition of driving licences, have been tightened up repeatedly since 1960. Between 1960 and 1994, blood testing without suspicion was not allowed and tests via breathalyser, which was introduced in 1988, had to be verified by blood tests. In 1994 random blood testing without suspicion was allowed and a regulation enforced that breathalyser results do not have to be verified by blood tests.

Also the penalties for drunk driving have increased considerably since 1969. Today offenders exceeding the BAC limits face fines ranging from 36 euro to 3,634 euro, depending on the BAC level and severity of the case. First offenders face suspension of their driving licence if their BAC exceeds 0.08 per cent, and all second offenders lose their licence. The minimal suspension time of driving licence varies from three weeks to four months depending on the BAC level. A longer suspension is possible in case of repeated offences within one year or if there are other aggravating circumstances. Driver improvement courses are mandatory for offenders who have a novice driving licence and for anybody exceeding the BAC level of 0.12 per cent. Prison terms are considered only in case of serious or fatal accidents. The laws and regulations concerning drunk driving and the respective sanctions have thus been tightened up continuously in the period after the Second World War. Consequently, general prevention or general deterrence as well as special prevention or individual deterrence have been increased by legal means.

Drinking at the workplace

The second special area where visible preventive measures have been undertaken in Austria is the workplace. Alcohol consumption at the workplace has been increasingly regulated and prohibited since the 1950s, though the measures are much less severe than those concerning drunk driving. The development of legal regulations has been accompanied by the development of informal regulations established by companies, who have increasingly decided to reduce the availability of alcoholic beverages in their canteens. This presumably has resulted in a slow change in the population's attitudes towards drinking at work.

The penalties for minor violations with regard to regulations concerning drinking at the workplace are mild, and many companies still allow alcoholic beverages in their canteens and tolerate their employees drinking moderately at breaks or even while working. Many companies are still eager not to be associated with alcohol-related measures, since they fear that taking measures indicates severe alcohol problems within the organisation. In the last years more and more companies have sought external help by prevention experts or have installed specific programmes to prevent alcohol problems among their employees.

Restricting overall availability of alcoholic beverages

Contrary to alcohol-related measures directed at individuals, structural alcohol control measures are rare in Austria. In general, alcoholic beverages are mostly treated like all other beverages. Thus a lot of licences are required for the distribution and for the serving of alcoholic beverages, but they are not alcohol-specific measures. For instance, standard licences for grocery stores, restaurants, coffee houses, inns, hotels etc. include the right to sell or serve alcoholic beverages. There are some restrictions for food shops concerning the right to serve food and beverages to be consumed on the premises. These regulations among others restrict the number of eating places in certain shops and say in detail what types of food these shops are allowed to serve to customers and how they are allowed to serve it. The rationale behind these regulations is that shops are not restaurants. Likewise, petrol stations are only allowed to sell a restricted number of food and beverage items, because they are neither shops nor restaurants. Owners of food shops can apply for a restaurant licence and owners of petrol stations can apply for a food shop licence or a restaurant licence, given they fulfil all legal requirements to do so. As a matter of fact, many petrol station owners have food shop or restaurant licences and are entitled to sell and serve a full range of alcoholic beverages.

Licences have a monetary price, but they are also related to public order and to public health. For instance, persons with a criminal record may not get licences to run restaurants or shops, and persons who purposely or repeatedly produce products with dangerous ingredients, or restaurant owners not keeping minimal hygienic standards may lose their licences. The idea behind these regulations, again, is not to restrict alcohol consumption for public health or public order reasons.

Production of alcoholic beverages mostly does not require any licence. Everyone in Austria has a right to produce alcoholic beverages for his or her own private use. For

distillation, a registration with the authorities is mandatory, but there is no licence required. Prior to joining the EU, the distillation of spirits was regulated by a state monopoly, but this monopoly has been abolished.

The decisions on opening and closing hours are in the hands of the nine state governors, and communities can adapt the closing times to their specific needs. If, for instance, citizens are bothered by noise of neighbouring restaurants or bars, or feel threatened by suspicious activities going on within them, the community is required to adapt opening and closing hours accordingly.

Austria used to have relatively restricted shop and restaurant closing hours before joining the EU. Most shops could not keep open later than 6 p.m., and had to close on Saturday at noon and keep closed on Sundays. Most restaurants and bars had to close no later than midnight. The closing hours are controlled by the police. Closing hours in the case of shops were predominantly interpreted as protection of smaller shops, which could not afford to hire additional staff, and as protection of employees, allowing them to spend weekends and evenings with their families. In the case of restaurants and bars, closing hours were predominately interpreted as protection of neighbours from late night noise.

Representatives of small trades and shops, the labour unions and the churches consequently formed an informal coalition to support the restricted closing hours. After joining the EU and facing international pressure to promote competition, the closing hours have been liberalised. Today more and more shops are open in the weekday evenings and also on Saturday afternoons, and many restaurants and bars are open to 2 or 3 a.m.

There are very few regulations restricting the serving of alcoholic beverages in public. Until 1979 the on-premise sale of alcoholic beverages was forbidden on days before elections and on election days until the elections were finished. Today it might not be possible to serve alcoholic beverages at special sports events or other events where a lot of people gather. But this decision would be a voluntary one of the organiser.

Restricting alcohol availability for special groups

Alcoholic beverages can be consumed almost everywhere where food and beverages are sold or served, at almost any time and by almost everybody. There are only two social groups who have attracted special preventive attention during the last decades, namely youth and drunken customers of bars and restaurants.

Restrictions concerning the availability of alcoholic beverages to youth belong to the oldest alcohol-related measures in Austria (Eisenbach-Stangl, 1991a; 1993). In 1922 a law came into force criminalising bar operators serving alcoholic beverages to youth under 14 years of age, and submitting those serving alcohol drinks to youth between 14 and 16 years of age to an administrative sentence, arrest or fine. The main forces behind the law were the youth movements of the main political parties.

These regulations have remained almost unchanged since then. The 9 states have also implemented the so-called youth protection regulations (Jugendschutzbestimmungen), restricting alcohol use among children and youth further. The regulations are rather complicated and vary from state to state. In all 9 Federal states youth younger than 16 years of age must not be served any alcohol and there are no restrictions concerning youth who are at least 18 years old. In 3 states there is no age limit for purchasing alcohol in shops. In 5 states the alcohol consumption of 16 and 17 year olds are restricted in different ways: In all 5 states this regulation excludes spirits, in two states Alcopops, in two drinking beyond a BAK level of 5g per litre blood etc..

In the 1990s a regulation came into force which required restaurants and bars to sell at least two beverages to a lower price per amount than the cheapest alcoholic beverages served. Though this regulation does not only concern youth, the idea behind it was especially to protect youth.

The first regulations concerning the serving of alcoholic beverages to drunken customers of bars and inns were put into force in the First Republic. Bar operators were allowed to turn away customers if they disturbed peace and order because of drunkenness and to call the police if necessary. In the state of Tyrol, a further law provided that drunkards could be prohibited to visit inns in a certain district for a certain period (Wirtshausverbot). During the Third Reich, a similar law was set into force in the whole of Austria, and this law has remained in force since then. In 1973 a law called general measures against alcohol abuse was implemented, according to which bar operators had to stop serving alcoholic beverages to customers who were disturbing peace and order.

The assignment of bar operators to contribute to the maintaining of public peace and order is presumably as weakly enforced as their assignment to protect the health of youth. Public drunkenness in general has never been an offence as such.

Alcohol taxation

There are nowadays four types of taxes on alcoholic beverages in Austria: a fixed percentage of price, a fixed rate per hectolitre of product, a fixed rate per hectolitre of pure alcohol in the finished product, and a fixed rate per hectolitre per grade of original gravity in the finished product. These types of taxes vary according to the product, the producer and the quantity produced. For instance, small farmers that sell their products themselves pay 10 per cent value added tax (VAT), while the others are taxed at 20 per cent VAT.

Beer is taxed per hectolitre per degree of Plato of 2.00 Euro (Table 3.3). There is a lower rate for small independent breweries. If they produce less than 12,500 hectolitres per year they pay 1.20 Euro per hectolitre per degree of Plato. The corresponding rate for breweries producing less than 25,000 hectolitres is 1.40 Euro. For breweries producing less than 37,500 hectolitres the rate is 1.60 Euro, and for breweries producing at most 50,000 hectolitres the rate is 1.80 Euro per hectolitre per degree of Plato. Wines and intermediate products are taxed at a fixed rate per hectolitre of the product. For

grape wines this excise duty rate has been set at zero (Uhl et al., 2001).

Distilled spirits are taxed on the basis of pure alcohol in the finished products (10.00 Euro per litre pure alcohol). However, small commercial distilleries producing at most 400 litres of pure alcohol per year, and farmers using products originating from their own farms for the first 100 litres pay 4,5 Euro per litre of pure alcohol.. The distillation of spirits for private use is not subjected to taxation up to a certain amount, but only farmers using their own stocks of fruits have the right to distil spirits for private use. The maximum tax-free quantity is 15 litres of pure alcohol per year. Most states allow three more tax-free litres per employee or adult in the family. Tyrol and Vorarlberg, however, allow six more litres. In most states the overall tax-free maximum per farm is 27 litres. In Tyrol and Vorarlberg it is 51 litres.

Table 3.3. Excise duty rates for alcoholic beverages in Austria in 2000 in Austrian shillings and in euro

Alcoholic beverage category*	OS	EUR
Beer per hectolitre and degree of Plato in the finished product will be reduced to 2.00 Euro the 1st April 2005	28.70	2.09
Non-fortified grape wine, per hectolitre of the product	0.00	0.00
Sparkling wine, per hectolitre of the product		
From grapes with less then 3 bar pressure will be reduced to 0.00 Euro (abolished) the 1st April 2005	1,000.00	72.67
From grapes with more then 3 bar pressure will be reduced to 0.00 Euro (abolished) the 1st April 2005	2,000.00	145.35
From other fruits, regardless of alcohol content treated like Intermediate products - tax depends on the air pressure (mildly or strongly spakling)	1,000.00	72.67
Intermediate products (alcoholic beverages other than beer, non fortified grape wine, sparkling grape wine and distilled spirits), per hectolitre of the product		
Still or less then 3 bar pressure is rounded to 73.00 Euro	1,000.00	72.67
more then 3 bar pressure is rounded to 144.00 Euro	2,000.00	145.35
Distilled beverages and liqueurs exceeding 15.0% alcohol by volume, per hectolitre of pure alcohol in the finished product is rounded to 1000.00 Euro	13,800.00	1,002.89

*For details of the lower limits of alcoholic beverages and other EU rules concerning alcohol taxation, see Chapter 2.

Source: Uhl et al., 2005.

In the 1970-1991 period, the special tax on beer was kept constant at 6,03 Euro per hectolitre beer below 14 degrees of Plato and 12,06 Euro for beer between 14 and 20 degrees of Plato. In 1992, a flat rate of 17,44 Euro per hectolitre was introduced. In 1995, again a new system was introduced, setting the beer excise duty rate at 1,45 Euro per hectolitre per degree of Plato in the finished product which meant that the excise duty rate for beer containing 12 degrees of Plato did not change. Lower rates of 60 to 90 per cent of the standard rate for smaller breweries were also introduced (Hurst, Gregory

& Gussman, 1997). In 2000 the excise duty was increased to 2,08 shillings per hectolitre per degree of Plato in the finished product, to compensate for the abolishment of the 10% “beverage tax” (see below) and in 2005 lowered to 2,00 Euro (Table 3.3).

A special wine tax was abolished in 1970 for still grape wines. However, in the year 1992 a special tax on bottled wine was introduced, but was again set at zero in 1995.

In 1970, the special tax on sparkling grape wines was 87,21 Euro per hectolitre for grape-based sparkling wines with more than 3 bar pressure, and 43,60 Euro per hectolitre grape-based sparkling wines with less than 3 bar pressure. The tax on grape wines will be abolished April 2005.

Fruit based sparkling wines are treated like intermediate products. The rate for intermediate products with less than 3 bar pressure is 73,00 Euro per hectolitre, intermediate products with more than 3 bar pressure 144.00 Euro per hectolitre (Uhl et al., 2005a).

Distilled spirits were already in the 1970s taxed on the basis of hectolitres of pure alcohol in the finished product. The 1970 rate of 316,13 Euro per hectolitre of pure alcohol was increased to 726,73 Euro in January 1992, and this rate was also kept in 1995. The excise duty rate of 1002,88 per hectolitre of pure alcohol in the finished product was reached in the year 2000. To adjust for the Euro the rate was rounded to 1000 Euro (Table 3.3).

There have also been other special taxes on alcoholic beverages in Austria besides excise duties. Until 1992 a special federal sales tax (Alkoholabgabe) of 10 per cent was paid on the retail price before VAT for alcoholic beverages. This special federal tax had been introduced in 1968 as a temporary tax. In 1992 it was integrated into other alcohol-specific excise duties. Secondly, municipalities levied the so-called beverage tax of 10 per cent at the retail level on all beverages, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages as well as on ice cream. Until 1974 beer was exempt from this tax. In 1992 the beverage tax was reduced to 5 per cent for non-alcoholic beverages and ice cream but remained at 10 per cent for all alcoholic beverages. In 2000 the beverage tax was abolished due to EU requirements.

In 1972 the VAT rate was 16 per cent. It increased to 18 per cent in January 1976 and to 20 per cent in January 1984. Since then the VAT has remained on the same level. The VAT rate is the same for most consumer goods except food which bears a 10 per cent VAT rate. This lower rate also applies to wine made and sold by the farmers directly to the consumers.

For distilled spirits, the beverage tax of 10 per cent and the VAT of 20 per cent covered 43 per cent and the excise duty 57 per cent of the total tax burden in the late 1990s. At the same time, the excise duty accounted for about one third of all taxes on beer (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997). In the mid-1970s the excise duty was 29 per cent of all taxes on beer, and for distilled spirits the excise duty covered around 40 per cent of all taxes (Brown, 1978).

Counted on a pure alcohol basis, the relation of the excise duties on table wine, beer and

distilled spirits in the 1990s was zero to one to two. When taking the beverage and value added taxes into account, this relation was 0.3 to 1.0 to 1.2 (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997). In the mid-1970s the relation of the excise duties between wine, beer and distilled spirits was 0.0 to 1.0 to 2.6, and the relation of total taxes between wine, beer and distilled spirits was 0.9 to 1.0 to 1.6 (Brown, 1978).

In the late 1990s about 24 per cent of wine prices consisted of taxes. The corresponding rates for beer and distilled spirits were 37 per cent and 57 per cent (Hurst, Gregory & Gussman, 1997). In the mid-1980s the corresponding figures were 31 per cent, 39 per cent and 43 per cent (Horgan, Sparrow & Brazeau, 1986). In the mid-1970s about 40 per cent of beer prices constituted of local or federal taxes (Brown, 1978).

The abolition of the beverage tax in the year 2000 and the corresponding increase in alcohol-related excise duties on beer and distilled spirits increased the prices of very cheap beer and distilled spirits. Wines and sparkling wines, as well as more expensive beer and distilled spirits, became cheaper (Uhl et al., 2001).

Changes in excise duty levels referred to above are given in nominal values. During the 1950-2000 period the value of the Austrian currency has decreased because of inflation. The increase in general price level in Austria in the 1960-2000 period as described by the consumer price index (CPI) are given in table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Consumer price index in Austria, 1960-2000, 1995 is 100

Year	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
CPI	23.3	28.2	33.1	50.1	60.3	76.6	85.3	100.0	106.8

Source: OECD, Main Economic Indicators, March 2000 CD-ROM.

The excise duty rates for beer and distilled spirits were kept constant in the 1970-1991 period, which means that in real terms their values in 1991 were less than 40 per cent of their value in 1970. Since then the excise duty rates for beer and distilled spirits have increased faster than inflation, which means that in 2000 the excise duty on distilled spirits in real terms is on about the same level as it was in 1970 and the excise duty on beer is some 30 per cent higher than it was in 1970. Compared to the early 1990s, excise duty rates for distilled spirits and beer are currently twice or three times heavier in real terms. It has to be considered though, that beverage tax of 10% of the price of all alcoholic beverages was abolished in 2000, which reduced alcohol prices dramatically.

According to the price data collected in the ECAS project, real prices of alcoholic beverages in Austria were more or less constant in the second half of the 1960s and in the early 1970s. By the early 1980s they had decreased by a fourth. After a 10 per cent increase in the mid-1980s real prices of alcoholic beverages did again decrease by a tenth by the mid-1990s (Leppänen, 1999).

Alcopops grew to be a hot issue in Austria, just like in many other countries of the EU, which lead to a public discussion demanding to introduce a special Alcopop tax. Since there was no decision to introduce such a tax yet and since the sales figures went back

dramatically – similar to those countries that have introduced such a tax – it seems that Alcopops are a temporary fashion and no lasting problem only. Because of this development it may be that the government will decide not to introduce such a tax (Uhl et al. 2005b).

Alcohol advertising

Advertising of alcoholic beverages is in Austria mostly restricted by a voluntary code. The most important body in this context is the Austrian Advertisement Council, an organisation dealing with all kinds of advertisements. Legal restrictions on alcohol advertising only apply to radio and television. According to the Austrian Advertisement Council it is illegal on television and radio

- to advertise distilled spirits,
- to advertise any alcoholic beverage in connection with children, youth, motor vehicle drivers and sports,
- to encourage alcohol consumption or alcohol abuse,
- to have sponsors who are active primarily in alcohol production, and
- to use subliminal advertising

These regulations, with the exception of the ban on advertising of distilled spirits, are also valid across the borders according to a multinational agreement in 1998. The voluntary code of the Austrian Advertisement Council furthermore requires that advertisements should adhere to the following criteria:

- no images or statements encouraging excessive alcohol consumption or abuse,
- no messages aiming at children or adolescents,
- no messages playing down the risks of alcohol consumption, e.g. when driving a motor vehicle,
- no allusion to health promoting or success stimulating or healing effects of alcohol,
- no representation of the drinking act itself,
- no representation of drunk persons,
- no representation of alcohol-drinking adolescents, and
- no reference to popular idols, sports events etc.

The Austrian Advertisement Council has no legal means to sanction violators, but since the advertisement industry, the media and the clients of the advertisement industry are involved in the organisation, the threat to be excluded from the council and the possibility to lose clients is considered to have some impact, but since the body acts upon complaints only and since there are hardly any complaints concerning alcohol advertisement – the effects of these voluntary measures are very limited.

Education and information

Education and information about alcohol is primarily carried out through brochures, campaigns and prevention programmes produced at the federal and state level. The media mostly deal with illicit drugs. They dramatise the drug problem and deal with alcohol in the commercial section. Negative consequences of drinking are usually related to drunk driving and alcoholism.

At the beginning of the 1980s the Ministry of Health produced a brochure on alcohol-related problems, that is due to be revised and adapted in the near future. Parallel to this brochure, a shorter one was produced for circulation to medical doctors and another one to the public (Erlacher, 2001a; 2001b). These three brochures will be distributed as part of a scheduled information campaign on alcohol-related problems.

An important area of alcohol prevention programmes is the schools. In the context of prevention of illegal drugs, alcohol along with prescription drugs became a prevention issue. Presently school-based substance abuse prevention programmes put much emphasis on unspecific approaches to improve life skills in the context of health promotion. This concept, at least in theory, is aiming at a reduction of alcohol-specific problems as well.

Since the 1990s, alcohol prevention in schools is increasingly carried out by a new profession and new organisations (Uhl & Springer, 2000). As mentioned above, in the first half of the 1990s addiction prevention centres have been established on the state level. These new organisations focus on an indirect approach, assisting mediators and multipliers of information rather than working directly with the target groups, and they are also active in developing prevention concepts. Their work is based on a wide concept of addiction, including abuse of illicit drugs, prescription drugs, licit drugs and non-substance-related dependencies.

Summary

Restrictions of alcohol availability were vividly discussed by the Austrian temperance movement between the First and the Second World Wars. The temperance movement also demanded the introduction of the Swiss Alkoholzehntel, that is 10 per cent of the tax revenues on alcoholic beverages should be spent for alcohol information, treatment and temperance unions. Prohibition at the best was an aim for the distant future. Rationing or price regulations have never been popular in the Austrian temperance movement. Opening and closing hours were tightened up in some states, but it is to be assumed that the main reason for these measures was the socially conflictual climate between the wars and not to combat alcohol-related problems.

The temperance movement was not very strong, and it split soon after the beginning of the 1920s along party political lines. Treatment from the start was an important aim of the strongest of the temperance unions, the Workers' League of Abstainers, and it became the major alcohol-related measure established between the wars. Presumably this did happen because all could at least agree that treatment was an adequate measure against alcohol-related problems. In other words, alcoholism treatment was established instead of preventive measures because it was politically more feasible (Eisenbach-Stangl, 1991b; 1999b).

It was again alcoholism treatment that stimulated alcohol political actions soon after the Second World War. Consequently, Austrians have until today considered alcoholism to be the major alcohol-related problem. Alcoholism is conceived in psychiatric terms, i.e. it is perceived as a symptom of an underlying psychiatric disease. The idea of

alcoholism as a disease sui generis has gained some footing during the last decades, not least due to Alcoholics Anonymous becoming visible at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s. In addition to alcoholism, only drunk driving gained public attention. But the attitudes towards the enforcement of harsher controls have always been quite ambivalent. Austrians like to drink and they like to drive and it is not easy to get these activities separated from each other.

Moderate alcohol consumption and occasional alcohol intoxication on the one hand and alcoholism on the other hand are perceived as distinct phenomena. As a result of this, one has to expect that any control measures aiming at alcohol consumption in general will face public resistance.

Today there are no alcohol-related pressure groups in Austria, neither those in favour of harsher controls nor those in favour of more liberalised controls. The alcohol industry is not a uniform political block, since alcohol is produced mostly on the one hand by small farmers who are producing wine or wine and distilled spirits, and on the other hand by relatively big industrial firms producing beer and distilled spirits. Alcohol producers and the catering, tourism and leisure-time industries are of course interested in moderate alcohol controls. Their traditional official opinion is against harmful drinking and for support of responsible alcohol use.

After joining the EU, Austria had to change some laws touching alcohol issues but not too many. If the EU should decide to issue a legal restriction on advertising of alcoholic beverages, health warnings or related regulations, Austria would probably go along, but it is very unlikely that the Austrian administration would go ahead with such regulations independently. Another aspect of internationalisation is that Austria signed the European Alcohol Action Plan of the WHO-EURO in 1995 and this was an incentive to the administration to restart some alcohol-related activities.

Since the prices of alcoholic beverages in Austria are at around the European average, it is realistic to expect that private imports from cheaper countries and private exports into more expensive countries compensate for each other to a large degree. The legal opportunity to import and export alcoholic beverages within the single European market has had an influence on the origin of alcoholic beverages. Foreign products are relatively cheaper now, but this has not had any dramatic influence on the average level of the prices of alcohol beverages or the overall consumption of alcoholic beverages. However, a major problem associated with the increasing unrecorded cross-border trade in alcoholic beverages is that consumption estimates based on official production, import and export statistics are becoming more unreliable for a new reason.

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